Perceptions of Good Citizenship

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Research Question

- How do democratic citizens understand good citizenship?
- Is there consensus on a hierarchy of civic norms in democracies?

Three-party Typology

Proposed Definition of Good Citizenship includes 3 Norm Types:

- **Obeying** (rules; laws; customs)
- **Contributing** (to the common good; the state)
- **Accepting** (others; others' right to have/ express different ideas)

Theory: why these three types of behaviors?

- Tripartite typology anchored on the conceptual framework of democratic theory
  - **Obeying** → reflects the Aristotelian virtue of being ruled; citizens learn by obeying (Green).
  - **Accepting** → rooted in ideals of equality and non-subordination (Mill, Tocqueville).
  - **Contributing** → more contested; classical theory sees citizens as utility maximizers, yet modern theorists (Sandel, Putnam) consider public service, self-sacrifice for country or nation, volunteering and donating to charitable causes universally valued and foundations of civic trust
- Our framework allows us to test how salient citizens believe each type of behavior really is

Empirical Approach

A) Injunctive norms (2nd order normative beliefs)

Shared expectations about behaviors that co-nationals believe everyone should follow → violations of these norms should incur disapproval by others

(Krupka and Weber, 2013; Sambanis, Tsakonas, and Lee, 2023)

- Draft a statement that states a normative position that is antithetical to the norm
- Ask respondents to guess how strongly co-nationals would disagree with the statement
- Answers are *incentivized* ($3 for finding "modal" answer in a nat rep sample)
- Outcome measures salience of each norm; large disapproval indicates the norm is injunctive

B) Personal beliefs (1st order normative beliefs)

(3 different ways)

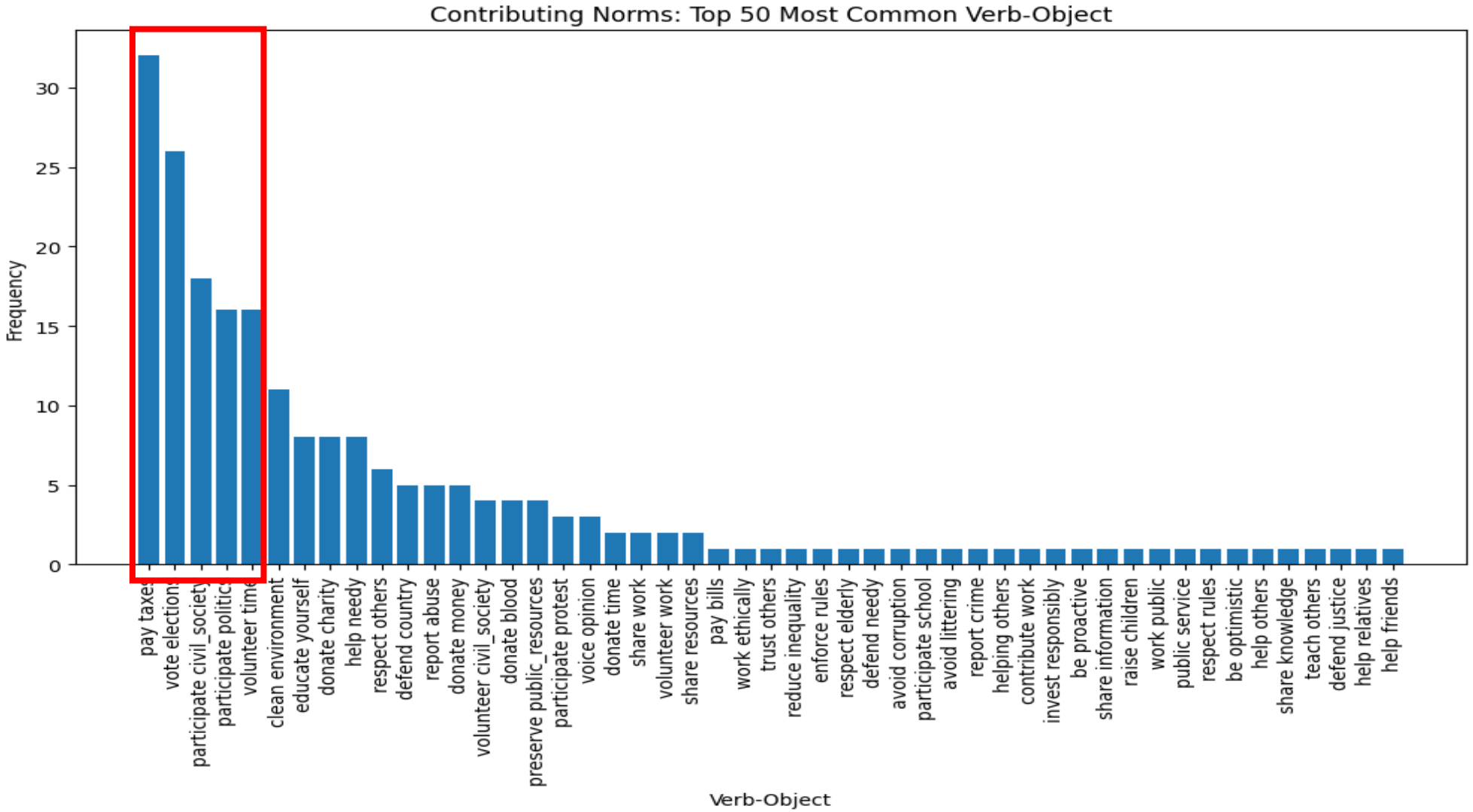
- Ask respondents "How much would YOU disapprove" -> problem: social desirability bias
- Conjoint experiment to account for bias: choose the "best citizen" from a pair of profiles
- Additional tool: ranking item (not discussed today)

Next obvious question is: where do these statements come from?

Crowdsourcing examples of civic norms

- Expert survey: Reached out to 630 academics from diverse fields (econ, polisci, sociologists, anthropologists etc), with relevant expertise (several countries/regions).
- Introduced the core idea of our project, gave examples of norms by type, and asked participants to provide 3 salient examples of contributing, obeying, and accepting norms & comment on tripartite typology
- A total of 110 invitees responded -> approx. 330 examples per category.
- Text analysis: Generated frequency tables of most common norms
- Selected 5 most frequently arising example of norms per category to use in the survey.

Crowdsourcing list of norms: Verb-object frequencies in expert surveys



Statements of violations of contributing norms

- **Paying taxes**

"I don't believe that I should declare all of my income on my tax return. It's OK to hide some of it so as to avoid paying taxes."

- **Voting**

"I don't believe I need to vote in elections. A single vote doesn't matter."

- **Working**

"Work is not a duty to society. It's OK to rely on the welfare system and claim benefits and subsidies if you don't work."

- **Donating**

"Why should I donate my time or money to help others? Let the government help the needy."

- **Keep environment clean**

"It's OK to throw trash on the street if there is no trashcan nearby."

Statements of violations of obeying norms

- **Paying taxes**

"Taxes are so high. Income tax, sales tax, social insurance. Why should I pay all of them? It's OK to find ways to skip paying some taxes."

- **No violence**

"Sometimes violence is the answer and people have to take matters into their own hands."

- **No corruption**

"If you need something done fast, or if you want to avoid paying fines, it is OK to bribe a public official."

- **Be polite/ respectful**

"Why should we always wait in line? I think it's fine to cut in line if one is in a hurry."

- **Responsible driving**

"It's OK to drive through a red light if there is no police around to see me do this."

Statements of violations of accepting norms

- **Gender Equity**

"Why should I hire a woman? She could get pregnant and go on leave, and then I would have to look for a new employee."

- **Diversity in the workplace**

"I don't think we should be concerned with promoting diversity in the workplace."

- **LGBTQ+ rights**

"I don't believe that same-sex couples should be allowed to adopt children."

- **Prevent hate speech**

"I would allow a public speech by an extremist group even if what they say seems hateful to some."

- **Allow free speech**

"Some views are just wrong. We should not have to listen to everyone else's opinions."

Country coverage

Sample

Europe	Americas
France	U.S.A.
Germany	Mexico
Greece	Argentina
Italy	Brazil
Poland	**Asia**
Denmark*	India
Spain*	S. Korea
United Kingdom*	Japan
Africa	Turkey*
Nigeria	Isreal*
South Africa	**Oceania**
Morocco*	Australia

* data collection ongoing

- Include democratic regimes across all 5 continents
- Pooled N=30,000 respondents so far (approx. 2,000/country)
- EU countries over-represented → possible extensions

Survey Structure

Design

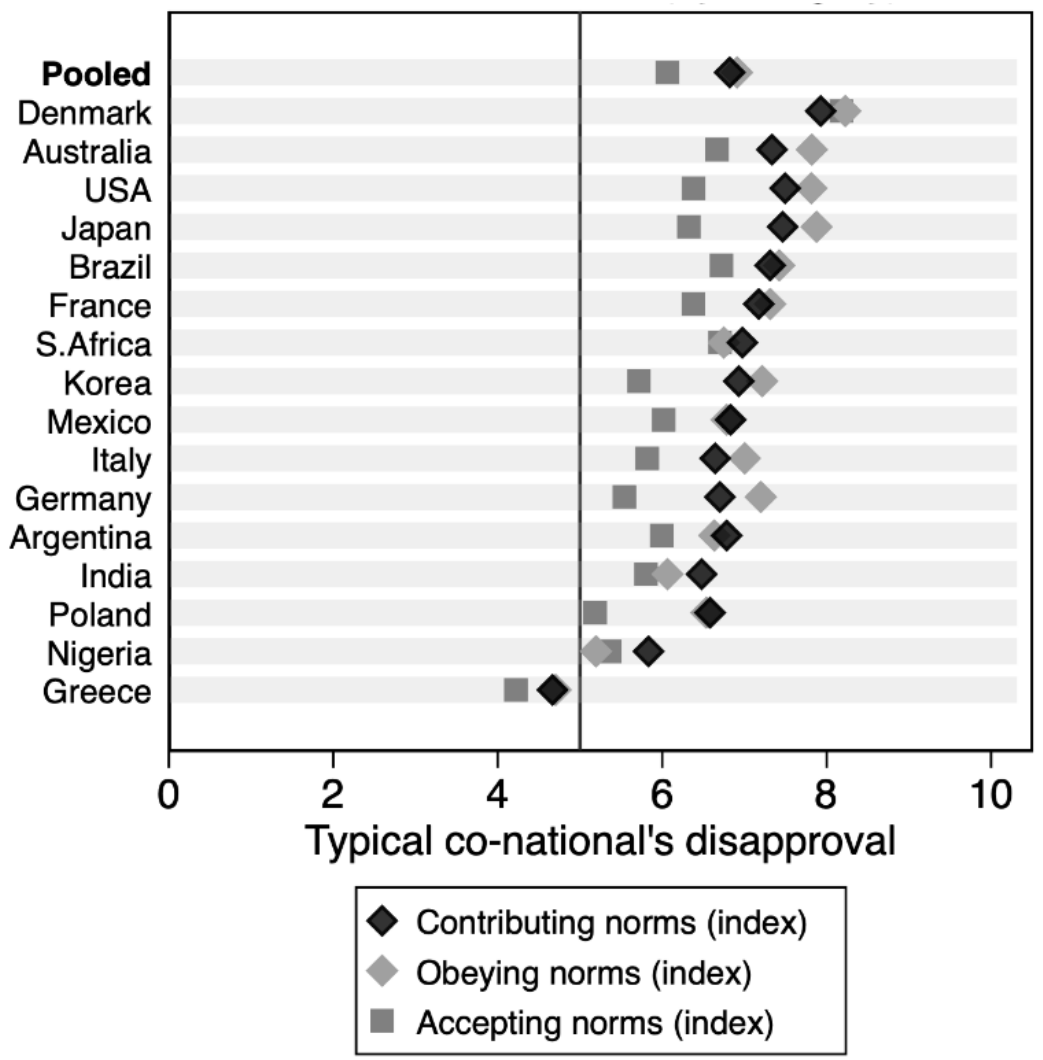
Two arms providing descriptive (Arm1) and experimental measurements (Arm2)

- Common core set of questions (demos, attention tests, social preferences, values)
- Arm 1:
  - Measure 2nd order normative beliefs (incentivized)
  - Then measure 1st order normative beliefs
- Arm 2 (different sample)
  - Conjoint experiment: who is a better citizen?
- Both arms:
  - Rank-ordering tool measuring 1st order beliefs (*not presented today*)

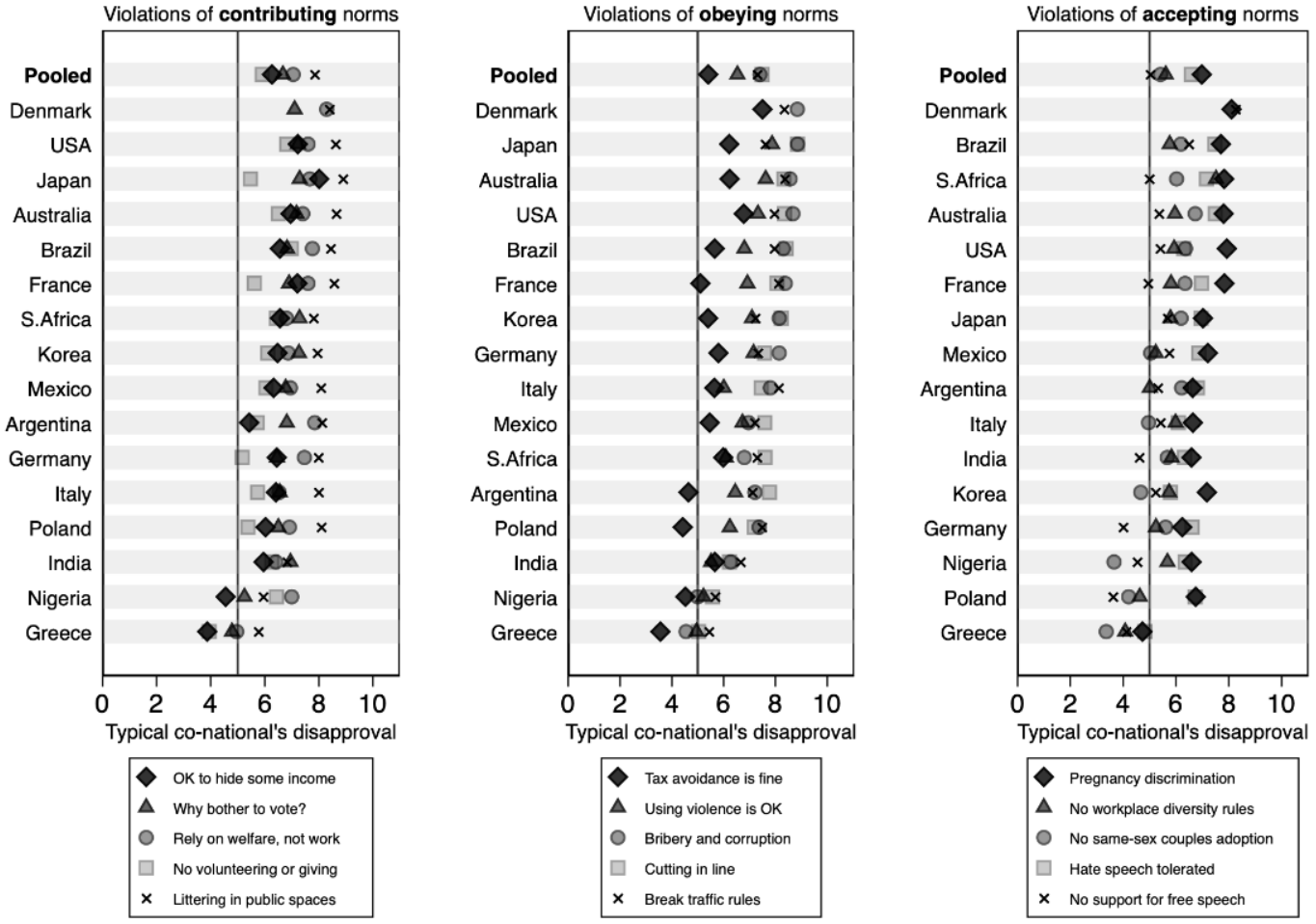
Descriptive results (Arm 1)

Descriptive Results: 2nd order beliefs (by category)

- Maximum disapproval=10
- Countries listed in order of declining salience of contributing norms
- Most countries: norm violations are recognized as such (disapproval>5) -> sole outlier: Greece
- Most countries: estimates fall in the 6-8 point range
- Accepting norms are less likely to be perceived as injunctive in most countries.



Descriptive Results: 2nd order beliefs (by country)



- Significant cross-country differences in levels of disapproval
- But: relative salience often similar across very different countries
- 1ST order beliefs : higher disapproval -> view themselves as better citizens
- Remarkable consistency between 2ND and 1ST order beliefs in terms of which norms are considered more salient.

Experimental results (Arm 2)

Good citizen experiment

We will now show you profiles of two hypothetical people who might be similar to German people whom you might encounter in the workplace or in a public setting. Imagine that you could overhear them talk to someone about how citizens should behave. Based on who they are and what they say, which of the two people would ***you say is a better citizen****?*

Gender: ["Male" , "Female"];

Age = ["28" , "42" , "58"];

Education = ["Did not finish high school" , "High school" , "Vocational training" , "University", "Post-Grad"];

Ancestry = ["Both parents German" , "One German parent" , "Immigrant origin"];

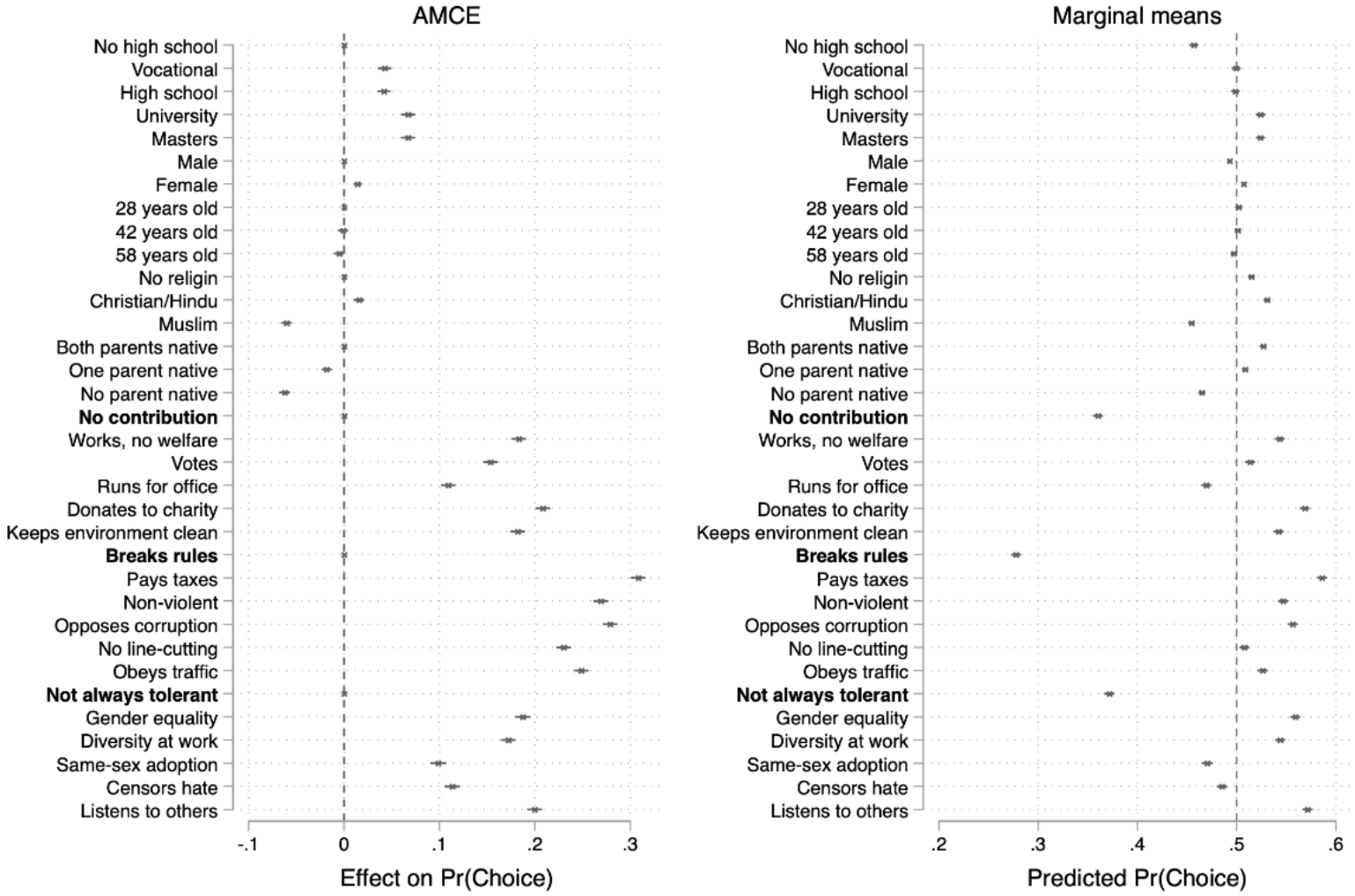
Religion = ["Christian" , "Muslim" , "No religion"];

Beliefs regarding contributing to the state and others = ["Makes no particular contribution to the common good", "Votes in elections", "Donates time and money to charity", "Works and does not rely on welfare support", "Keeps environment clean", "Stands for election to public office"];

Beliefs regarding obeying rules = ["Does not follow rules", "Declares income and pays all taxes", "Fundamentally opposes corruption", "Obeys traffic rules", "Does not use violence", "Never cuts the line"];

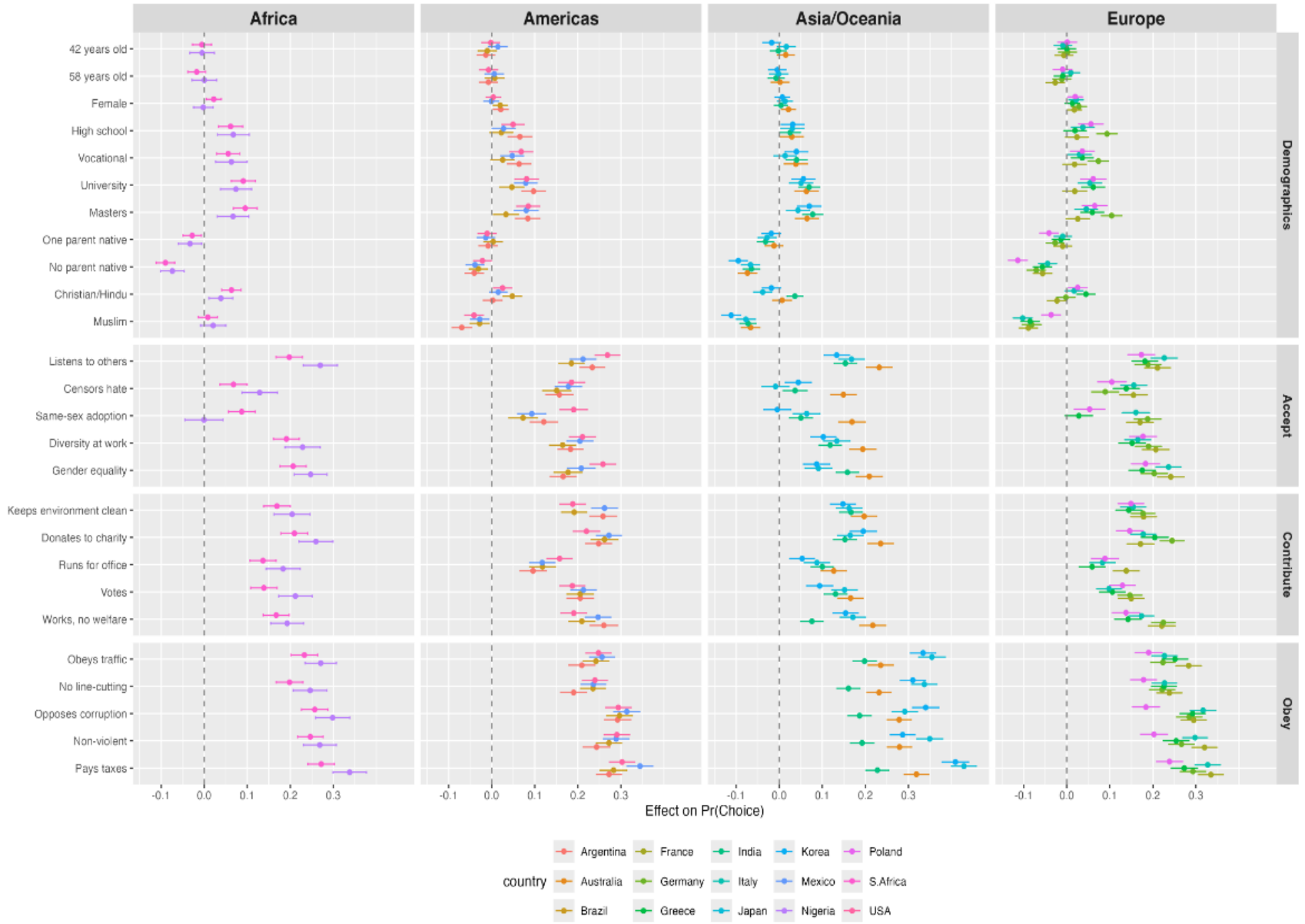
Beliefs regarding accepting others/other ideas = ["Is not always tolerant towards others", "Listens to others' views", "Supports adoption by same-sex couples", "Supports gender equity", "Prioritizes diversity in the workplace", "Supports censoring hate speech"];

Experimental Results: Good citizen conjoint (pooled data)



- Obeying norms are the most salient (right panel)
- Contributing and accepting norms very close -> contrast to previously measured 2nd and 1st order beliefs (method less susceptible to social desirability)
- Ascriptive characteristics matter (Muslim & Immigrant penalty)
- Education matters (agrees with expert survey

Experimental Results: Good citizen conjoint (by country)



- Unexpectedly high degree of consensus in norm hierarchies across/ within regions
- Larger within-region differences in Asia/Oceania

Robustness

- Some behaviors can fit in more than one category
  - Not many candidates (in expert list).
  - Paying taxes is prime example -> We include it in both obeying and contributing
  - Each set of statements are framed by the introductory statement as examples of obeying, contributing, or accepting norms.
- Results sensitive to the specific examples?
  - Different examples (pilot in GR, DE)
- Results sensitive the wording used in the statement?
  - Small changes in wording and tone (pilots in GR, PL, DE, DK)
- Results sensitive to sample choice
  - Tried to hit quotas in terms of gender, age, geography
  - Will use weights, where/if necessary
  - Run the same examples in two different samples of the same country (pilot in GR)
- Other?

Conclusion/ Discussion

- We propose a new tripartite typology of norms that define good citizenship (contributing, obeying, accepting)
- We find an unexpectedly high degree of consistency in norm hierarchies across countries, with obeying norms valued the most.
- Contributing to the common good is also highly valued, contrary to strictly utilitarian models of citizenship.
- Accepting norms lag behind; but our experimental data show that citizens personally value these behaviors, suggesting a disconnect between public norms and private preferences.

Thank you for your attention!

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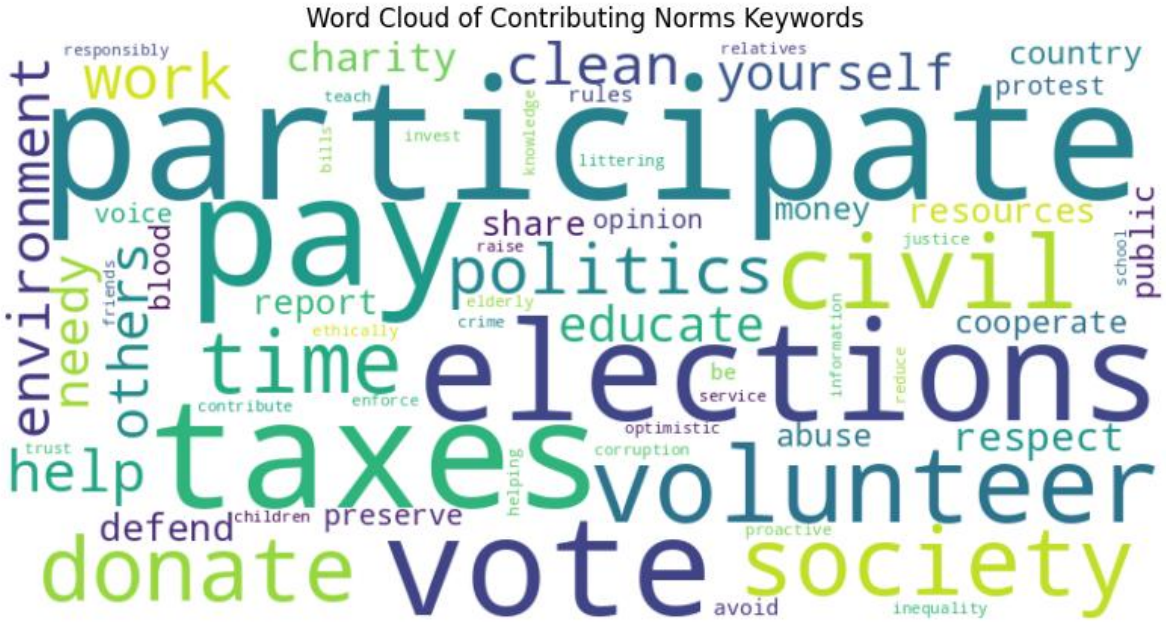
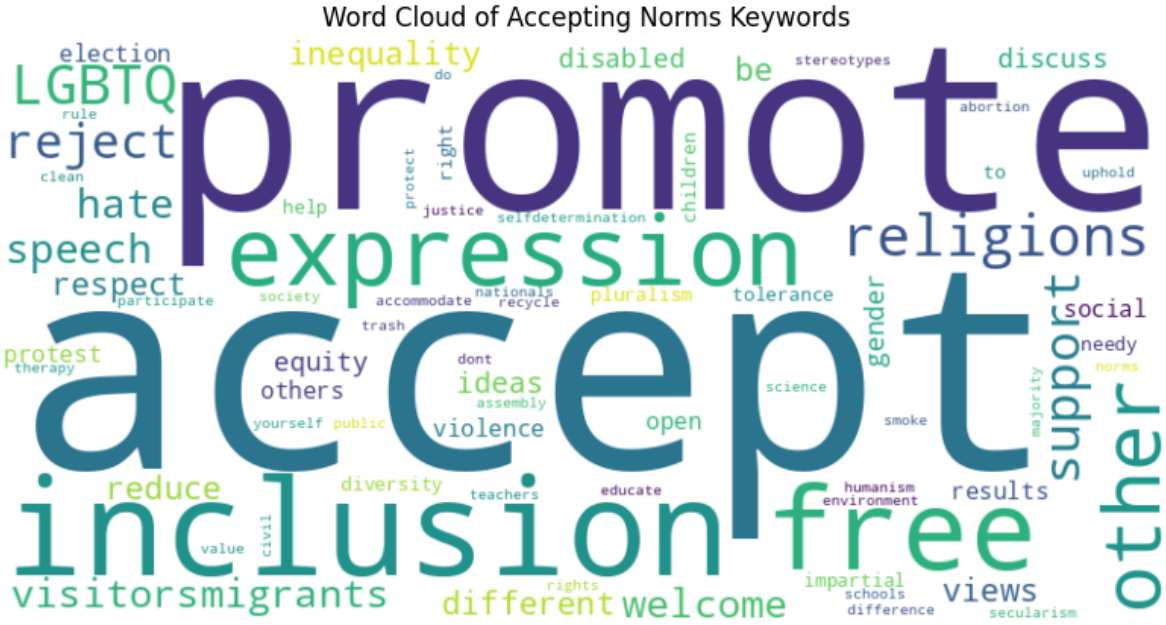
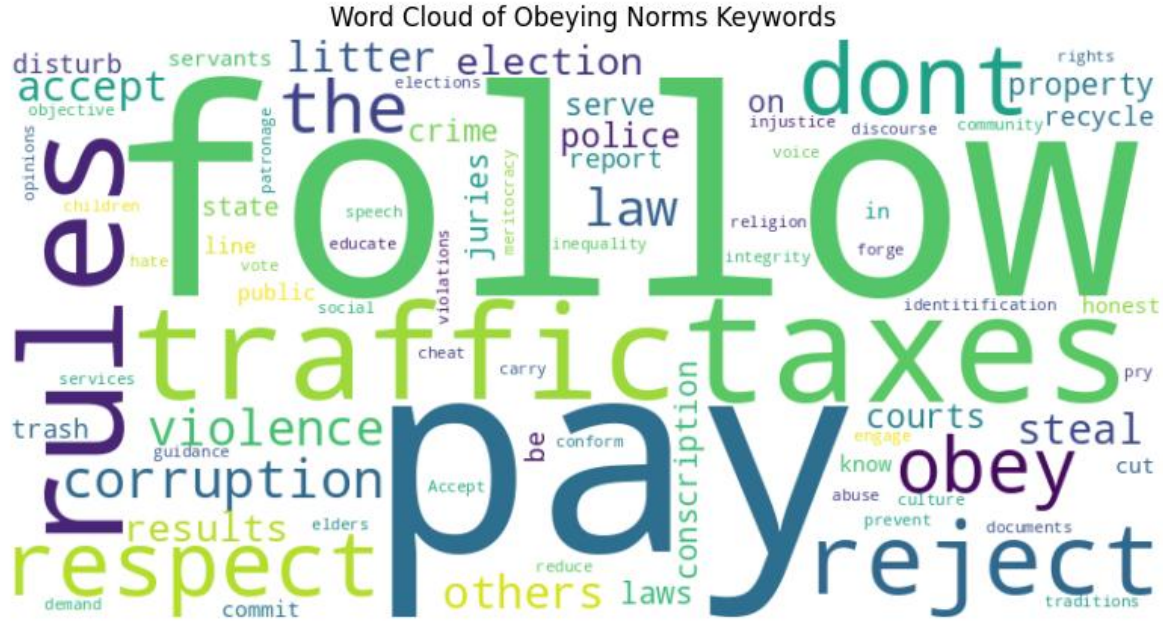
Appendix

Word clouds from expert survey







Classification of statements into categories

- Most statements are easily classified into one of the three norm categories, as reflected in the expert survey + AI-based classification exercise
- Notable exception: paying taxes (obeying, but also contributing)
    1. We include taxes in both categories -> allows to compare the relative salience of contributing and obeying norms without artificially weighing on the side of one of these categories
    2. Each set of statements are framed by the introductory statement as examples of obeying, contributing, or accepting norms -> respondents are primed to think of tax compliance as an example of how one "contributes to society" (in the contributing norms category) or an example of "obeying social rules" (in the obeying norms category).

Robustness analysis -> changing the examples of norm violations

- Potentially many different examples of each type of norm and even more permutations of the same type of behavior
- Examining all such behaviors would be intractable (and unnecessary if they capture a common core)
- Two extra pilot surveys (DE & GR) to establish that minor permutations to the list of examples of norm violations do not influence the results regarding norm hierarchies disproportionately.
- We collect data from (a) a different sample in the same country; and (b) change the set of examples/statements we use to construct each category.

Robustness analysis -> Small Changes in wording

“Original” vs “Alternative” wording

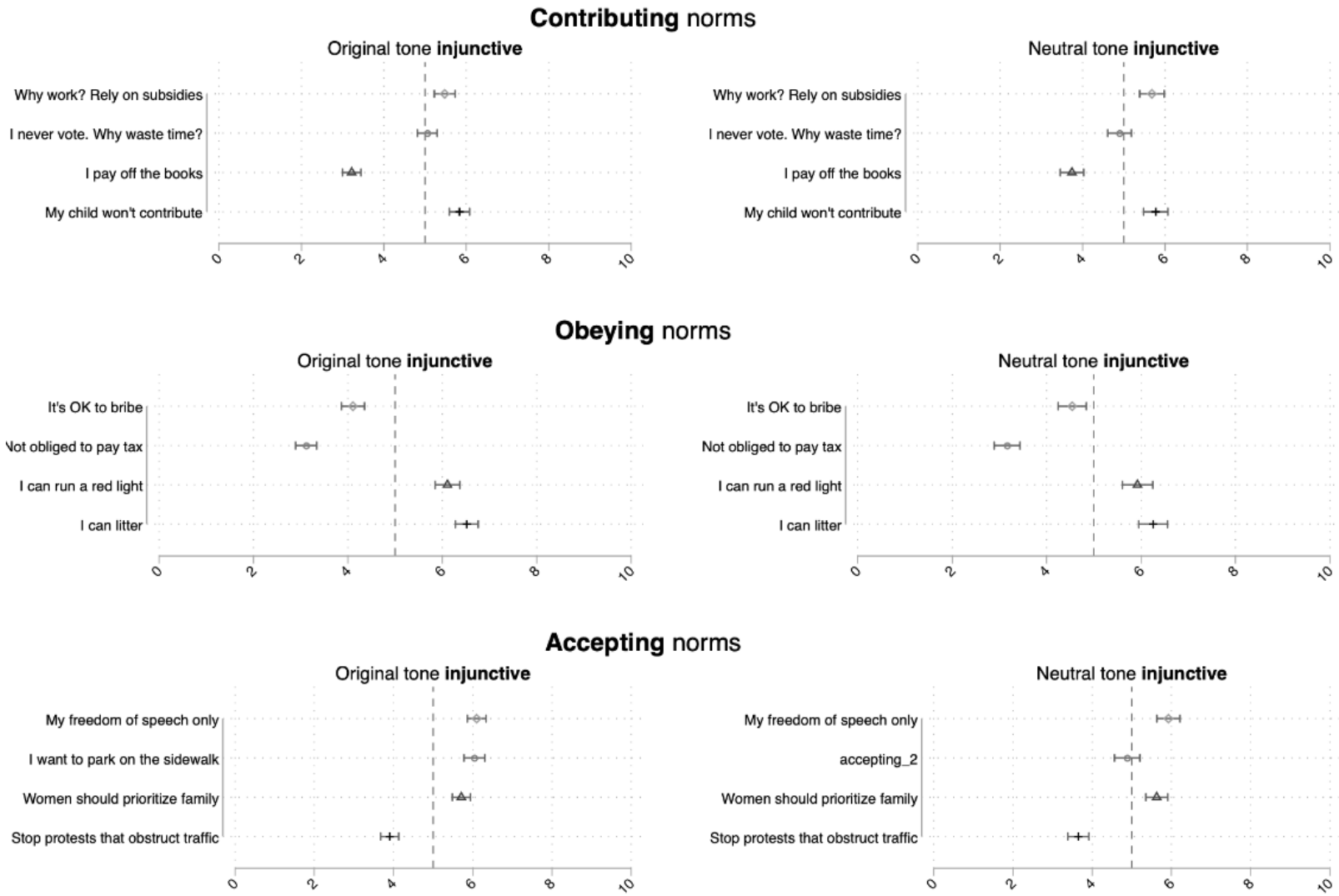
Original (survey)

"Work is not a duty to society. It’s OK to rely on the welfare system and claim benefits and subsidies if you don’t work."

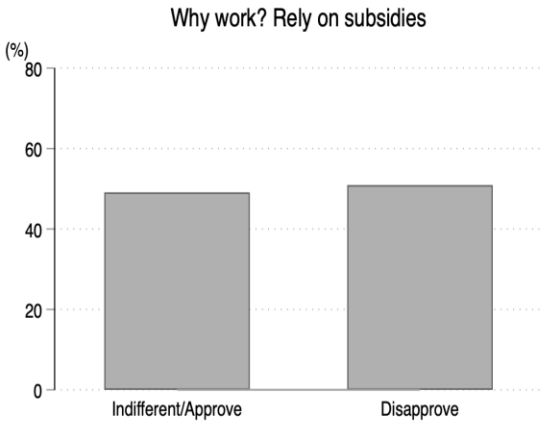
Alternative (pilot)

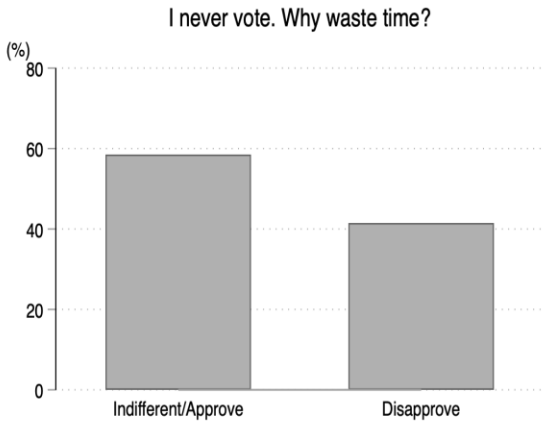
Why work? I rely on the welfare system and claim all benefits and subsidies I can.

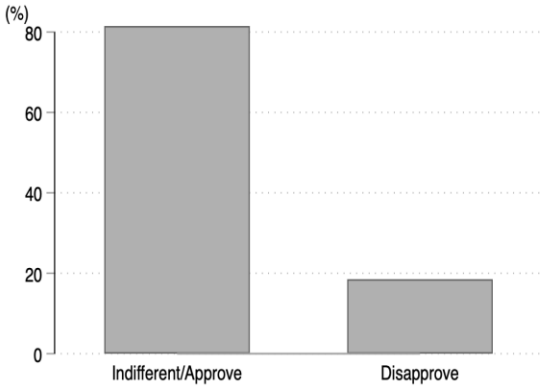
Robustness analysis -> Small Changes in Tone (GR pilot)

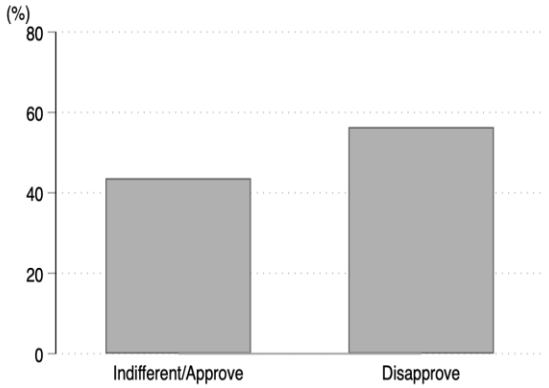


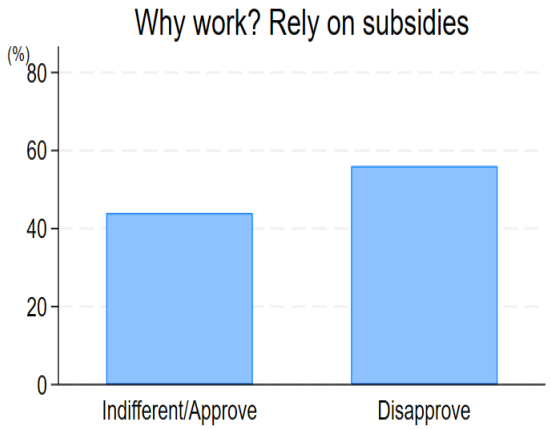
Robustness analysis -> Small Changes in Wording (Contributing norms)

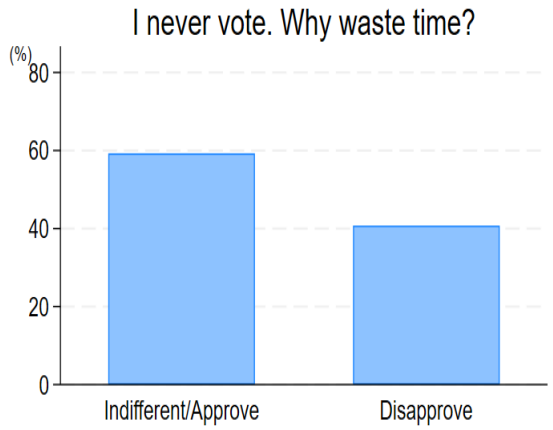


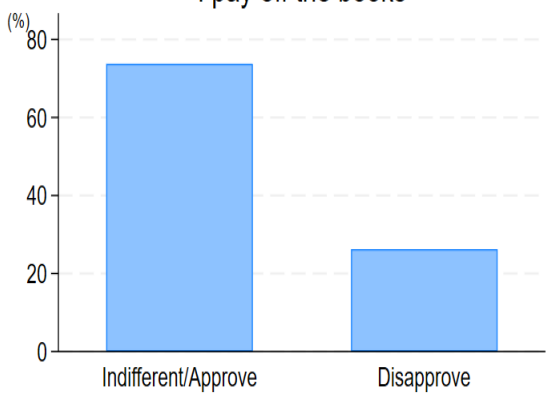


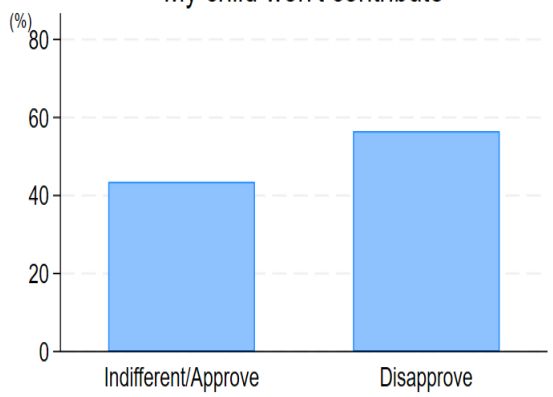




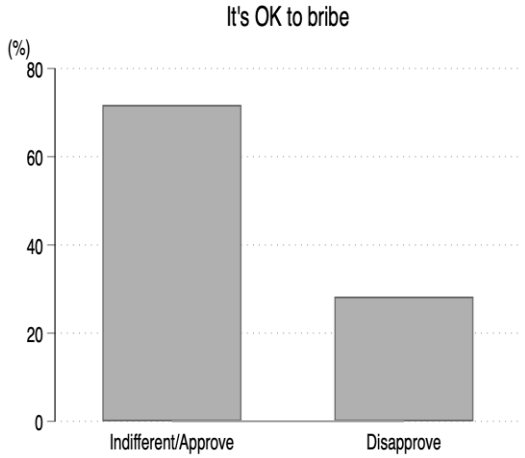


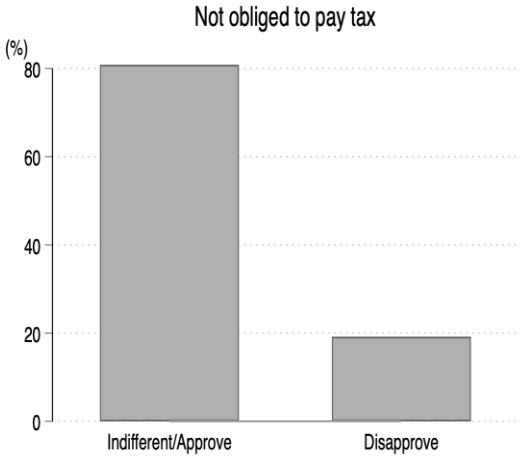


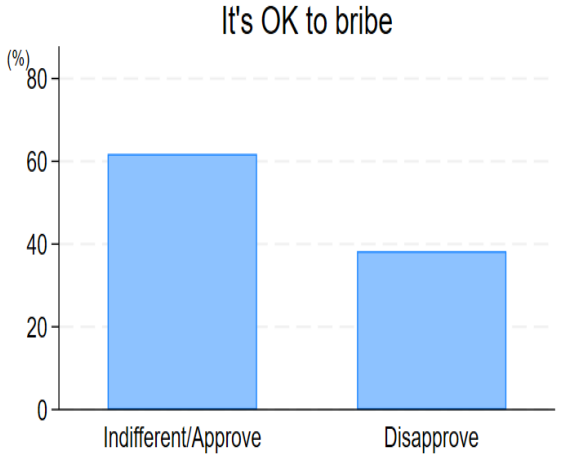


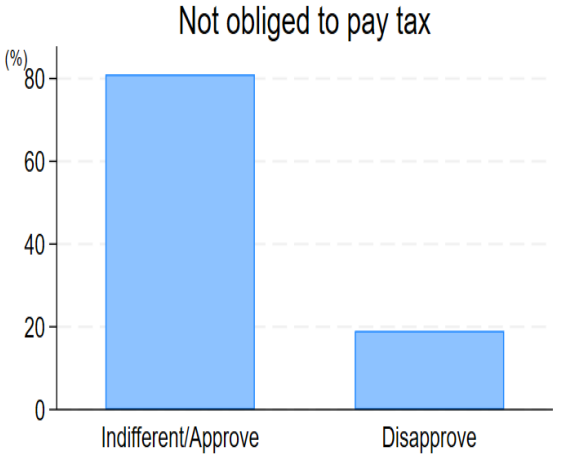


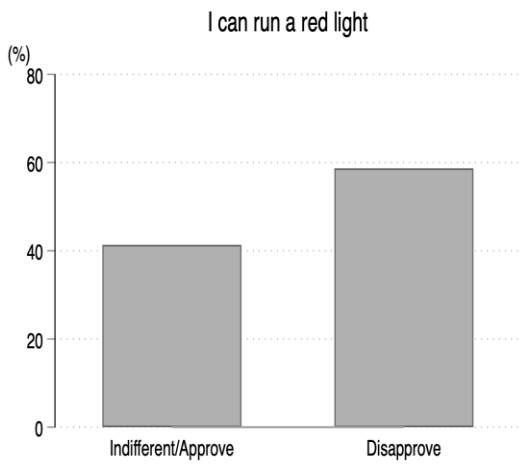
Robustness analysis -> Small Changes in Wording (Obeying norms)

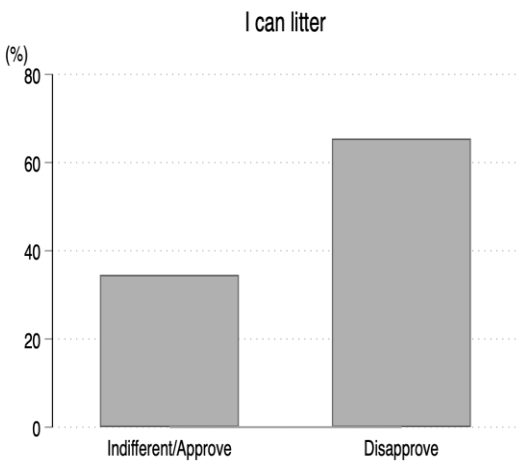


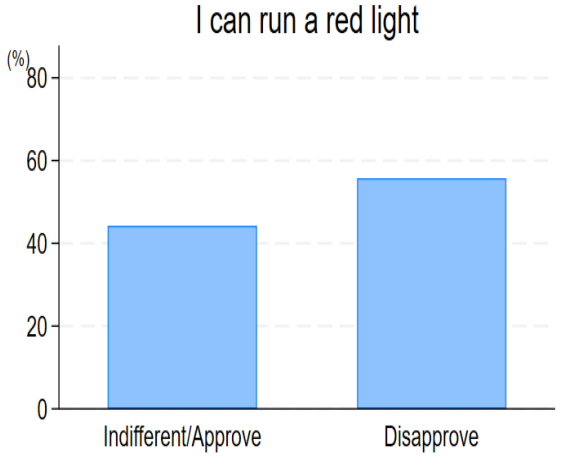


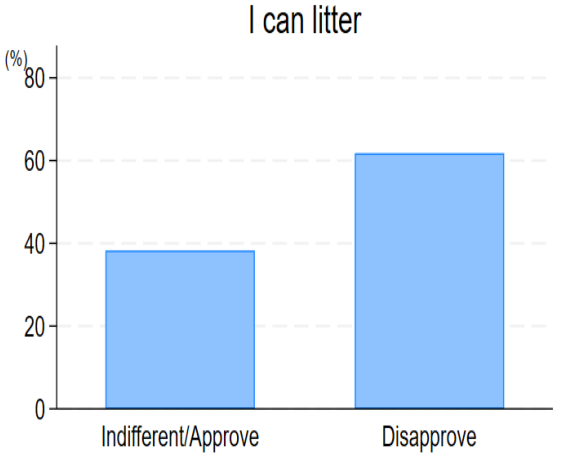




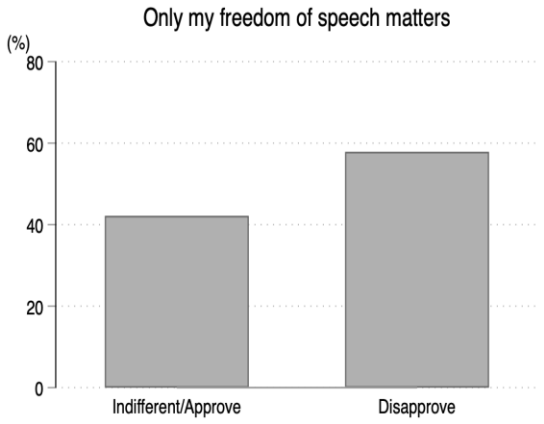


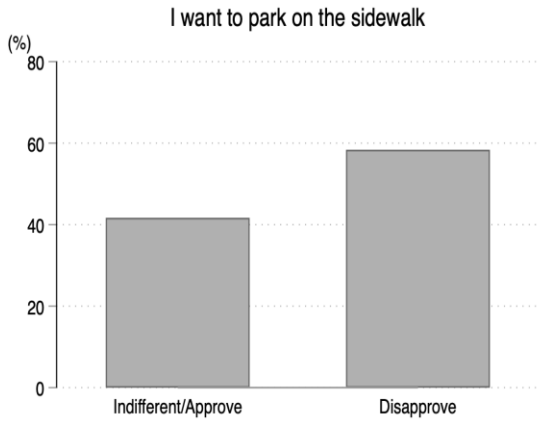


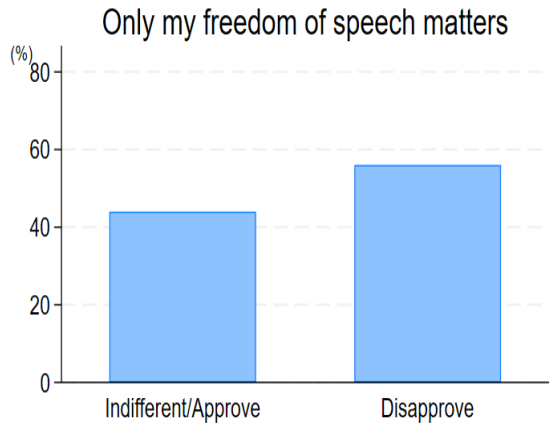


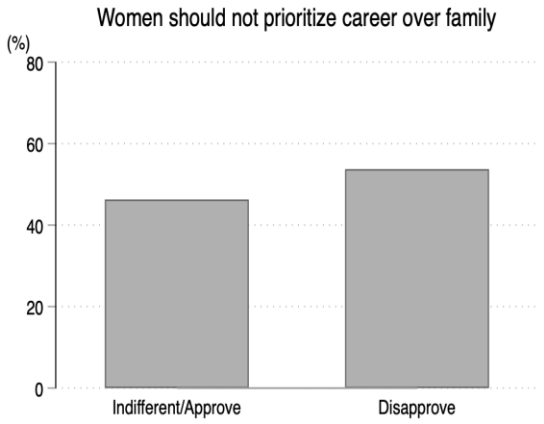


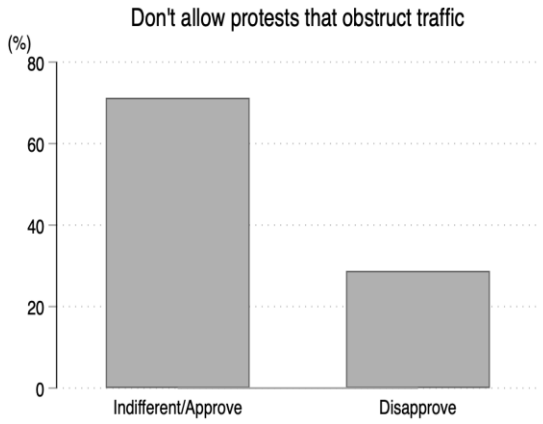
Robustness analysis -> Small Changes in Wording (Accepting norms)

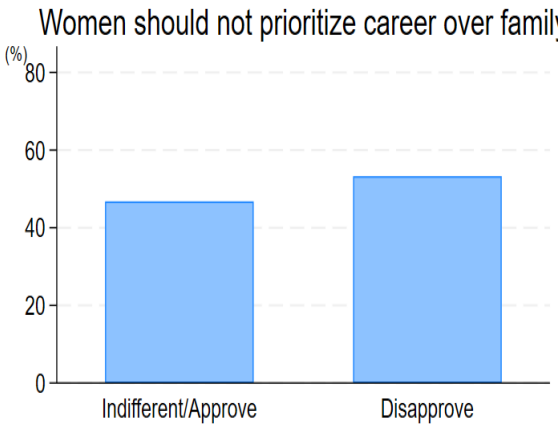


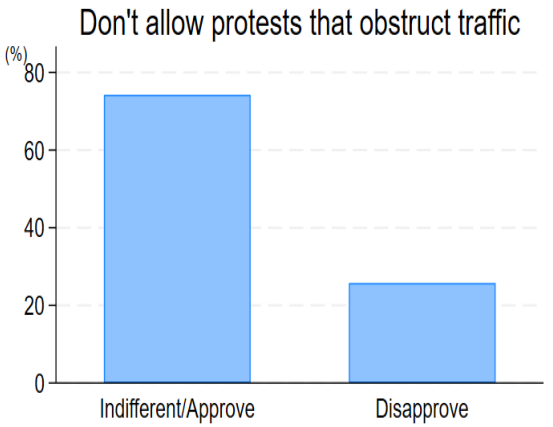












Arm1-> First and Second order Beliefs

"Self" vs "Others"

Self

"Imagine that another Greek citizen made the following statements in public about the way that person behaves in society.
How would you react if you heard these statements?
Would you approve or disapprove, and how strongly? ."

Others

"Imagine that another Greek citizen made the following statements in public about the way that person behaves in society.
How would the typical Greek react if they heard these statements?
Would they approve or disapprove, and how strongly?"

Results: 1st order beliefs (Arm1)